

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I observe the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The absence of a quorum has been noted. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further proceedings under the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I would like to move to morning business for the purpose of giving a statement of about 7 or 8 minutes. I would ask unanimous consent that I might speak as in morning business for a period not to exceed 8 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. BRYAN. Again, I thank the Chair.

HIGH-LEVEL NUCLEAR WASTE

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues an issue of great importance to Nevada, but should be of concern to those from other States as well.

Mr. President, for 13 years, since 1982, Nevada has been the prime target of the nuclear power industry for the disposal of its high level commercial nuclear waste.

In spite of the fact that Nevada has no nuclear reactors, commercial or otherwise, and never benefited from nuclear power, Nevada has been identified by the nuclear power special interest lobby as its chosen site for the disposal of one of the most poisonous, dangerous substances known to mankind.

Since 1987, as the result of a back-room deal reached during the deliberations of a conference committee, Yucca Mountain, 90 miles northwest of Nevada, has been the sole site being studied by the Federal Government for a high-level nuclear waste dump.

As many of my colleagues are aware, the repository program has been a dismal failure.

Despite the expenditure of nearly \$5 billion, a repository is no closer to being built today than it was in 1982, when the original Nuclear Waste Policy Act was passed by Congress.

Faced with the failure of the permanent repository program, and frustrated by the Federal Government's obvious inability to accept nuclear waste from commercial reactors anytime near the originally planned 1998 deadline, the nuclear power industry and its advocates decided to initiate another, even more dangerous, assault on Nevada.

Raising the specter of widespread shutdowns of nuclear power reactors across the Nation, and demanding adherence to the obviously impossible

1998 deadline, the nuclear power industry now demands that the Federal Government immediately build so-called interim storage facilities at the Nevada test site.

This new attack on the health and safety of Nevadans is coming at us from all angles.

Numerous bills have been introduced in the House and Senate to target Nevada for interim storage—all written by the nuclear power industry, and all fiercely opposed by Nevada's Governor and congressional delegation, and the vast majority of Nevadans.

At the same time, we face the prospect of another back room deal on a conference report singling Nevada out for a dump it wants no part of.

In spite of the fact that neither the House or Senate energy and water appropriations bills would allow interim storage to be constructed in Nevada, by all indications, the conference report may target Nevada as the sole site for interim storage.

Mr. President, nothing could be less fair to the citizens of my State and I, and the rest of the Nevada congressional delegation, will do everything possible to see that this provision does not pass.

Mr. President, as you may expect, we in Nevada fear that should a nuclear waste dump of any type ever be built in our State, the health and safety of Nevadans will be severely threatened.

With 16,000 shipments of highly toxic waste arriving from across the Nation, the potential for a catastrophic accident near Las Vegas, a community of 1 million residents, is enormous.

Mr. President, while Nevada faces the greatest risk, and is at the most peril should the nuclear power industry get its way with Congress, every Senator should take a careful look at exactly what is being proposed.

As citizens across the Nation are slowly beginning to realize, the nuclear power industry is proposing to ship, at the earliest date possible, an unprecedented volume of shipments of extremely poisonous, highly toxic high level nuclear waste—over 16,000 shipments across 43 States, by both rail and truck.

Mr. President, I invite my colleagues' attention to the proposed shipment routes. Each Senator will note that his or her State may be a candidate for this massive shipment with all the risks that are here by way of accident or other unforeseen consequence. Even though the plan sadly targets Nevada out here as the ultimate repository, it will pass through the States of most of my colleagues. I emphasize that they too and their constituents are at risk, as are my constituents.

Mr. President, my colleagues should look closely at this map, because this map shows the likely routes for the transportation of high-level waste in the very near future.

As I pointed out a moment ago, nearly every State would be effected.

The nuclear power industry, of course, is quick to claim that we have

nothing to worry about, that nuclear waste transport is perfectly safe.

Mr. President, I doubt many of my constituents, or those of other Members, would put much faith in the nuclear power industry's assertions.

Quite simply, accidents do happen. While only a relative few make the national news, the United States has nearly 1,500 rail derailments a year.

Heavy truck accidents occur approximately six times for each million miles traveled which, if applied to the thousands of truck shipments under the nuclear power industry's plan, would result in at least 15 truck accidents involving nuclear waste each and every year.

The events of the past week raise even more frightening possibilities. In addition to the potential for accidents, nuclear waste shipments could become prime targets for acts of sabotage or terrorism.

Monday's sabotage of the Sunset Limited near Hyder, AZ, is a stark reminder of the dangers we face from criminals and terrorists every day. In a matter of minutes, those responsible for the Sunset Limited wreck created a derailment which took the life of one passenger, and injured numerous others.

From the reports that I have read, Mr. President, that sabotage took approximately 10 minutes to effect.

In an ironic twist, this week's act of sabotage appears to be a copycat of the August, 1939 derailment near Harney, NV, that killed 24 passengers.

The simple fact is that no one, not the nuclear power industry, not the Department of Energy, and not the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, no one can guarantee the safety of the transportation of nuclear waste.

Sound public policy dictates a cautious approach to the transport of such hazardous materials. They should only be moved if absolutely necessary. This is simply not the case with nuclear waste.

Nuclear waste is currently stored on-site, at the 109 nuclear power reactors in the United States—80 percent of them east of the Mississippi River.

These sites, of necessity, will remain storage facilities for nuclear materials at least as long as the reactor continues to operate—several decades, if not longer. Technology Mr. President, currently exists—dry cask storage—that is licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and available for utilities to purchase if they need additional storage.

Numerous utilities have taken advantage of this technology, and have moved to dry cask storage. Outside of the local political problems many reactors face when they try to increase storage, there is simply no reason any utility needing additional storage could not do the same.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair would advise the Senator that his 8 minutes has expired.